



## Facilitation Guide

Being well prepared for facilitation is important. Rarely does a program run exactly as it is written in the manual. Facilitation can be unpredictable, but with a well-equipped tool kit you will be capable of handling the unexpected and achieving success! Use the facilitation tips and techniques in this guide to compliment your training. The following strategies are intended to create an affirming culture in a way that allows you to get through the program material in the allotted time and ensure that learning is taking place.

It is important to note that facilitation is a skill that is honed over time. It is also a skill that is adapted to each person's own talents and personality characteristics. The way that you facilitate will rarely be exactly the same as the way that a colleague will facilitate. Use the resources and techniques below to develop your own style. This will allow you to approach groups of children in a genuine manner that is most conducive to establishing rapport and communicating effectively. Not only do children appreciate adults who are authentic, but this approach models the values of the Speak Up Be Safe program.

### Section A: Preparation

Being prepared can help you feel most comfortable in the facilitation role. The energy you bring into the classroom can affect the children's behavior and attitude toward the program. Key elements of preparation include:

- Having a high level of familiarity with the curriculum.
- Having the materials needed.
- Knowing about the make-up of the community and school environment.
- Focusing your energy on positivity and enthusiasm. Children often fulfill the expectations we have for them, whether or not those expectations have been directly stated. Model the energy and attitude that you want to see in the children.

Another key component of preparation is having some familiarity with the teacher and the classroom management strategies used with the children on a daily basis. This allows you to ease into the established classroom norms and focus less on behavior management and more on the learning.

### Section B: Creating a Space where Every Child Can Learn

In Speak Up Be Safe, children are taught that they are special and have the right to be safe. Throughout the curriculum, use every opportunity to encourage and affirm each child's efforts at participation. The attitude of the facilitator toward each child must be positive and affirming. Besides, when we listen, we learn too!



#### Facilitation Techniques:

1. **“Coocoon” the children in safety:** Cocooning the children in safety means you are creating a secure atmosphere where open communication and ideas are validated and encouraged. You will know if you have cocooned the classroom into a safe space when the room is filled with children whom are eager to participate. (School personnel report that children who generally perform poorly or who usually are silent participate in our program with enthusiasm.)
2. **Validate with positive responses:** Validating means that anything the child says or feels is valid and should not be negated. For instance, if a child gives an answer you know is off track, you should still respond positively (participation is encouraged) and then perhaps reframe their response. Example responses include: Good idea, wow, you are really thinking, right, I’m glad you said that, what good ideas you all have, that is such a good question, and your ideas are really helping me today!
3. **Accommodate:** Recognize that each classroom is different and will require the use of different strategies. While you will want to identify a style of facilitation that fits you, it will also be important to “read” the children as you move through the curriculum and accommodate their needs in your style and approach. For example, some groups of children may be very serious and do not respond well to humor, while other groups require fun and enthusiasm throughout.
4. **Reframe:** Reframe a child’s response if it is off track or does not fit within the discussion as you have framed it. Be creative, but remember this is a safe space. Therefore, give the child credit for their answer and then be flexible. Use responses such as, “That is one answer, is there another?” Or “Ok, does anyone else have an idea?”

#### Example of Reframing:

Child: “Tricks are mean.”

Facilitator: “Yes, tricks can be mean, especially sexual abuse tricks which hurt children.

Child: “Tricks are fun!”

Facilitator: “Yes, you’re right! Some tricks are fun like trick candles on a birthday cake or sitting on a whoopee cushion. Fun tricks make us laugh. But, some tricks are not fun; like a sexual abuse trick.”

5. **Redirect:** Close observation of the children allows you to catch challenging behaviors as they arise. You may also learn the personalities of the children and how they interact, allowing you to identify situations that may lead to distracting behavior. When a child shows signs of a behavior issue, redirect her attention to another activity. Draw the child



away from a classmate who may have a conflicting personality. Redirecting children often allows them to become immersed in different activities without further difficulties. Some children require frequent redirection to stay on task and avoid behaviors that distract the group from the session.

### Essential Principles of Redirection

- Maintain a positive, up-beat demeanor when redirecting children. It is normal for children to drift off-task. Remembering this allows you to view redirection not as a disruption but as part of your teaching.
  - Believe your redirection will have a successful outcome. Your belief will influence your behavior and the child will be positively disposed to positive action.
  - Get the child's attention, redirect her/him accordingly and move on to facilitating the class. Do not make a big deal out of redirection.
  - Provide active supervision by making sure your movement pattern reaches all your children. Use gestures, choose your standing position strategically, and take opportunities to move around the room. Look and listen for children who are struggling with the activities, talking to neighbors, or other forms of off-task behavior. Get involved before things have a chance to escalate. With some children eye contact can be the first step in redirecting. Keep talking as you move closer and simply walk over until you are standing next to the child. When you have conveyed the redirection, move away. The idea is to avoid drawing undue attention to the child you are redirecting. You want to stop the behavior with almost no stoppage of teaching and learning.
  - Sometimes it is best not to get involved. Choose not to get involved if you decide the goal of the off-task behavior is your attention and the class or group is not distracted. In this case, pay attention to, or praise children who are on task.
6. Use Non-Verbal Communication: Creating a climate that facilitates learning and retention requires good nonverbal and verbal skills. It is not only what you say in the classroom that is important, but it's how you say it that can make the difference to children. Nonverbal messages are an essential component of communication in the teaching process. Being aware of nonverbal communication in the classroom will make you a better receiver of children's messages, you will become a better sender of signals that reinforce learning, and it will increase the degree of the perceived psychological closeness between teacher and child.

### Types of Non-Verbal Communication

- Eye contact: Eye contact, an important channel of interpersonal communication,



helps regulate the flow of communication, and it signals interest in others. Furthermore, eye contact with audiences increases the speaker's credibility. Facilitators who make eye contact open the flow of communication and convey interest, concern, warmth and credibility.

- **Facial expressions:** Facial expressions are an important way of conveying messages and are a form of expression that many people are unaware of. Facilitators should understand that one's facial expressions and verbal communication should match. It may help to watch yourself in the mirror, or to have a friend or colleague watch you facilitate and give you feedback on your expressions. Smiling is a powerful cue that can transmit happiness, friendliness, warmth, liking, and affiliation. So, if you smile frequently you will be perceived as more likable, friendly, warm and approachable. Smiling is often contagious and children will react favorably to it.
  - **Gestures:** A lively and animated teaching style captures children's attention, makes the material more interesting, facilitates learning and provides a bit of entertainment. Head nods, a form of gestures, communicate positive reinforcement to children and indicate that you are listening. If you fail to gesture while speaking, you may be perceived as boring, stiff, and unanimated.
  - **Posture and body orientation:** You communicate numerous messages by the way you walk, talk, stand, and sit. Standing erect, but not rigid, and leaning slightly forward communicates to children that you are approachable, receptive and friendly. Furthermore, interpersonal closeness results when you and your children face each other. Speaking with your back turned or looking at the floor or ceiling should be avoided; it communicates disinterest to your class. Women often unknowingly tilt their heads slightly to the side when listening to someone. This conveys openness and helps to minimize power differentials between the facilitator and the speaker.
7. **Use Humor:** Humor is often overlooked as a teaching tool. Laughter releases stress and tension for both facilitator and child. You should develop the ability to laugh at yourself and encourage children to do the same. It fosters a friendly classroom environment that facilitates learning. Have fun! Laugh! Children are funny and it is great when we can laugh with them and not at them. Relax and enjoy working with the kids and hearing their ideas, questions, and responses.
8. **Pause:** As facilitators, we often have a lot on our minds – getting through the material, keeping track of time, engaging the children – and this can create a disconnect between our intentions to make space for the children to participate and the reality of the space that is created. Using intentional pauses after a question is asked of the children gives them an opportunity to consider what has been asked and to offer their thoughts and experiences. These engagement opportunities are crucial to the success of the program. Consider them also a chance for you to gather your thoughts, take a deep breath, and check in with where the children are with the material. As you pause, there may be a



moment of silence. Be comfortable in that silence. It may mean that the children are thinking about what you have said or asked. Use the silence to gauge the children's understanding through their non-verbal cues. Did they understand what was asked? Or do they need you to rephrase or reframe it?

9. **Pace Yourself:** The curriculum has been developed with suggested timeframes for each section. Use them to help you to pace yourself through the sessions. You want to be sure to give enough time to each section to ensure that the children have grasped the concepts, but you also want to be sure to get to all of the material and not have to rush through the last sections. This will require the development of a timing strategy on your part. Some facilitators use a clock or a watch in the classroom. Others ask for a teacher or someone else in the room (if available) to give a signal when half of the time has passed or at other designated intervals. Figure out what will work best for you.
10. **Alter your Speech:** For maximum effectiveness, learn to alter the elements of your voice, such as tone, pitch, rhythm, volume, and inflection. By altering your speech, you can maintain engagement, draw attention to a concept or statement, and convey when you have shifted from a serious segment to a lighter one. This technique can convey important messages to your audience without having to directly state them, and when used in combination with other techniques such as non-verbal communication, can create a dynamic presentation style.
11. **Be Yourself:** There is no need to feel like you have to relate to the children using language or behavior that you wouldn't normally use or by trying to engage them as a "friend". It is appropriate to be an adult who is both an authority and an affirming, safe person. And, as previously mentioned, being yourself models one of the values of the program by encouraging the children to do the same.

### Section C: Culturally Competent Facilitation

Facilitators should be aware of important cultural differences in order to improve cross cultural communicative competence and to reach children from a variety of cultural backgrounds. Facilitating in a multicultural setting requires sensitivity to these differences. However, there are a number of factors that impact how we relate and interact that limit our ability to generalize to entire groups or make assumptions about a child based on race, ethnicity, socioeconomic status, or any other identity group to which he/she may belong.

Key things for facilitators to consider are:

- What is your own background and identity? And how might this impact the interaction you may have with children from different backgrounds or identities?
- What stereotypes or assumptions are made about the group with whom you will be conducting the curriculum? How can you be aware of these stereotypes and work to avoid reinforcing them?



- What cultural norms related to communication patterns, respect for elders, taboo topics of discussion, and/or personal space would be important for you to be aware of? How can you access this information either prior to (ie; from the teacher) or during (ie; through gauging the interactions) the session?

Facilitators are also encouraged to use the “Assessing Community Culture and Norms” resource document for additional questions and issues to consider.

### Section D: Classroom Management

Managing a classroom or a large group of children requires techniques that maintain engagement, and both establish and hold children accountable to norms or guidelines. In some of the Speak Up Be Safe curriculum, there is time allotted to begin establishing norms or guidelines. The techniques below are suggested as compliments to the norms. Most of the time, children create challenges to facilitation out of boredom or discomfort. It may also be a way to seek attention or approval. Understanding these motivating factors can assist you in heading off most challenges.

1. **Talk to the Teacher about Discipline Procedures:** As previously mentioned, there is no reason to create classroom management strategies where they already exist. Talk with the classroom teacher prior to conducting the session to find out what works for her/him and mirror these strategies during your time in the class.
2. **Establish Norms for the Group:** Particularly if you are not able to talk with the teacher prior to the session, or if you have multiple classes together in a session, establish your own norm for getting the attention of the children while you are together. Be sure to clearly explain this when you begin the session. For example, you may want to state, “There are a lot of us here together today, and it will be important for us to make sure everyone is heard. If I need to get your attention I am going to... Does everyone understand?” It may even be worth the time (a minute or two) to practice. Have the children begin talking and then use your technique to get their attention. Praise them for a quick response and move on.
  - a. **Sample Techniques:**
    - i. Anyone who can see my hand raised, stop talking and raise their own hand. Don’t continue until everyone is quiet and has their hands raised.
    - ii. Hold up a closed hand and raise one finger at a time. When all five fingers are up the class is quiet.
    - iii. If you can hear me clap your hands one time. If you can hear me clap your hands two times.
3. **Provide Clear Instructions:** Children appreciate structure and clear expectations. Anytime an activity is being facilitated, you should provide clear and concise instructions prior to beginning the activity or to having the children begin any



movement. This will also enhance your efficiency in moving from one activity to another.

4. **Use Names:** Children often respond well to hearing their own name. This is difficult in a very large group, but it does not take much time to ask each child who offers a response in the curriculum to say his/her name first. You can begin to remember some of the names and call on children personally.
5. **Have Every Child Participate:** Involve as many children in the program as possible. Participating children are children who are listening and learning! Pay attention to children who have not participated and use subtle encouragement to ensure that they know that their responses are valued. Once a child has participated, you will be pleased to notice that this child will continue to be actively involved. Involvement enables the child to feel special, to have fun, to feel capable, to be validated, and to exhibit his or her newly acquired skills and knowledge. Be clear, however, about when participation is encouraged and when the children are expected to listen. Because this curriculum goes back and forth between teaching and facilitating, it may not always be apparent to a child.

### Section E: Learning Styles

Children learn in different ways. It is important to recognize that children may need to use a variety of techniques in order to best learn the material being presented. There are some common denominators of learning styles for different ages, so be sure to read the section of this guide with the developmental characteristics for the grade level that you will be facilitating.

# The Cone of Learning

*I see and I forget.  
 I hear and I remember.  
 I do and I understand.*  
 — Confucius

